

if they get to look at the big things not the divisive, distractive, destructive, puny elements that too often dominate your politics, the American people will do what they've been doing for over 200 years, they will make the right decision. And your children and your grandchildren will be the richer for it. Thank you. And God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Keith Geiger, outgoing president, and Bob Chase, incoming president, National Education Association; and Terry Dozier, former Teacher of the Year and Special Adviser to the Secretary of Education.

### **Statement on Signing the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996**

*July 3, 1996*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3525, the "Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996," which will make it easier to prosecute those who set fire to churches. I applaud the Congress' swift, unanimous, and bipartisan passage of this bill. I have signed it promptly upon its transmittal to me so that the new law can go into effect as soon as possible, but I plan to acknowledge the Congress' role more formally and discuss the importance of this measure at an appropriate occasion next week.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
July 3, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3525, approved July 3, was assigned Public Law No. 104-155.

### **Statement on the Results of the Russian Election**

*July 3, 1996*

As we wait to receive the final results of the Russian elections, and as our Nation prepares to celebrate our own freedom and independence, I want to recognize the historic significance of what we have seen in Russia today.

From Vladivostok to Kaliningrad, tens of millions of Russians returned to the polls to

complete the process of selecting their President. The Russian people can take real pride in this extraordinary achievement. After centuries of imperial rule and decades of Communist oppression, they have asserted their right to have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. This election process shows just how far Russia's political reform has come over the last 5 years.

The American people can take pride as well in our steady support for Russia's democratic reform. As the results are counted, we will shortly learn the choice of the Russian people. But one thing is clear: Today was a triumph for democracy in Russia.

### **Memorandum on the Western Power Outage**

*July 3, 1996*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Energy*

*Subject: Western Power Outage*

Yesterday, there was an unexplained power failure in the Western power grid, disrupting electric service to hundreds of thousands of customers in 15 Western states. The outages had a ripple effect as power stations across the vast grid automatically shut down as the result of experiencing a surge. The outages caused numerous problems throughout the region, including disruptions of train service, traffic problems, loss of air conditioning, interruption of telephone service, and interference with water supplies.

I direct you to provide to me a report within 30 days, that:

1. Analyzes the cause of yesterday's outage;
2. Describes the extent and duration of the outage;
3. Analyzes whether the outage could have been prevented and whether the Western Systems Coordinating Council (WSCC) electric reliability system responded as anticipated to the initial outage;
4. Makes recommendations for any operational or regulatory changes at WSCC; and
5. Assesses the adequacy of existing North American electric reliability systems

and makes recommendations for any operational or regulatory changes.

I have directed that these steps be taken to assure the reliability of the Nation's electricity infrastructure. A steady supply of power is a vital factor in both the local and national economies and is essential for the safety of all Americans. The swift implementation of this directive will assure that these interests will be protected.

**William J. Clinton**

**Remarks on Independence Day at Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Maryland**

*July 4, 1996*

Thank you very much. First of all, Admiral Newsome, thank you for welcoming us, and thank you for the fine work that you and your colleagues do here every day to make our country stronger in so many ways.

Congressman Hoyer, thank you for your leadership, thank you for being with us today on Independence Day, and for what you do every day for this district and for our Nation.

I'd like to say a special word of thanks to Craig Koppe, who saved both of our lives out there when the eagle got a little nervous—[*laughter*—she wanted to be free even more than we wanted to free her, I think—[*laughter*—and to Jamie Clark, and to all those here who work to conserve our Nation's treasures.

We have Federal employees here. We have some State employees here from Maryland who are devoting their careers to preserving our environment, our natural resources, and our precious species. And I'd like to ask all the rest of us on this Independence Day to thank them for what they do for America. [*Applause*] Thank you very, very much.

I want to thank all the people who are here from the Department of the Interior. I see Deputy Secretary Garamendi and there are many others here from the Interior Department. We've seeded this crowd today. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Bruce Babbitt. We have fought in many ways to try to make sure that America would enhance the quality of its environment and en-

hance the diversity and strength of its natural resources as we continue to grow the economy and move into the 21st century.

I said when I sought this position in 1992 that I did not believe that we could march into the 21st century and leave our children and grandchildren the legacy they deserved unless we found a way to grow the American economy and preserve the environment, enhance our natural resources. Bruce Babbitt has been the point person in that endeavor. He has certainly endured more personal attacks for standing up for America's environment and for our natural resources than any other member of this administration. He has fought a long and sometimes lonely battle. But in the last year we have seen the American people clearly adopting the position we have fought for all along. They know that America's future depends upon the preservation of our natural resources. And that will be Bruce Babbitt's enduring legacy. I am very grateful to him and I know all Americans are.

I want to thank the State officials from Maryland who are here, including Maryland State Treasurer Richard Dixon and Senator Mike Miller, the president of the Maryland Senate; and other senators and delegates who are here, and people from St. Mary's County, the county commissioners who are here. I thank all of them for coming. I thank John Griffin, the Secretary of the Maryland department of natural resources.

And I'd like to ask, since Jamie recognized him, I'd like to ask Molly Beattie's aunt and uncle to please be recognized: Herb and Michelle Morris. Would you all stand up and be recognized? Thank you so much for being here today. [*Applause*] Thank you.

I want to say a few words about Independence Day and American eagles, but before I do, I'd like to take just a moment on our Independence Day to celebrate and applaud the freedom and independence exercised yesterday in another part of the world. As people who cherish the right to choose our leaders and have a say in our Nation's destiny, we should take just a moment on our Independence Day and reflect on what happened in Russia yesterday.

When I was a boy growing up, it would have been unthinkable that in just a few dec-